

Speaker kicks off Hispanic celebration

We celebrate the culture, contributions and successes of our Hispanic brothers and sisters in the United States with the observance of Hispanic American Heritage Month each year from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15.

This year's kick-off celebration featured Pastor Luis R. Scott as the guest speaker. Scott, originally from Puerto Rico, is a Gulf War Veteran and retired Army chaplain. He currently serves as pastor for the Ambassadors of Christ Church ministries in Columbus, Ga.

Scott emphasized our cultural uniqueness and how our differences enrich the lives of others.

Just take a little time to see what other people can provide in our lives, he said. "We can enrich each other if we want to and there are three things people from every culture want to experience:

- * To be appreciated regardless of their cultural heritage
- * To be respected regardless of their social status
- * To have the freedom to be who God created them to be regardless

of their place of origin.

"In order to complete those tasks, we need to first know ourselves," he said. Scott related an anecdote to audience members about people who always complain of seeing the branch in someone else's eye while they overlook a speck in their own eye.

"Keep your own score," Scott commanded, as he gave a scenario of keeping your score in a game of golf. "Does it matter what the other guy writes on his sheet? How does it affect your score? Always have a need, desire, or force to drive you to where you want to be. You need to have a passion. Keep a positive attitude and always be prepared to be a blessing."

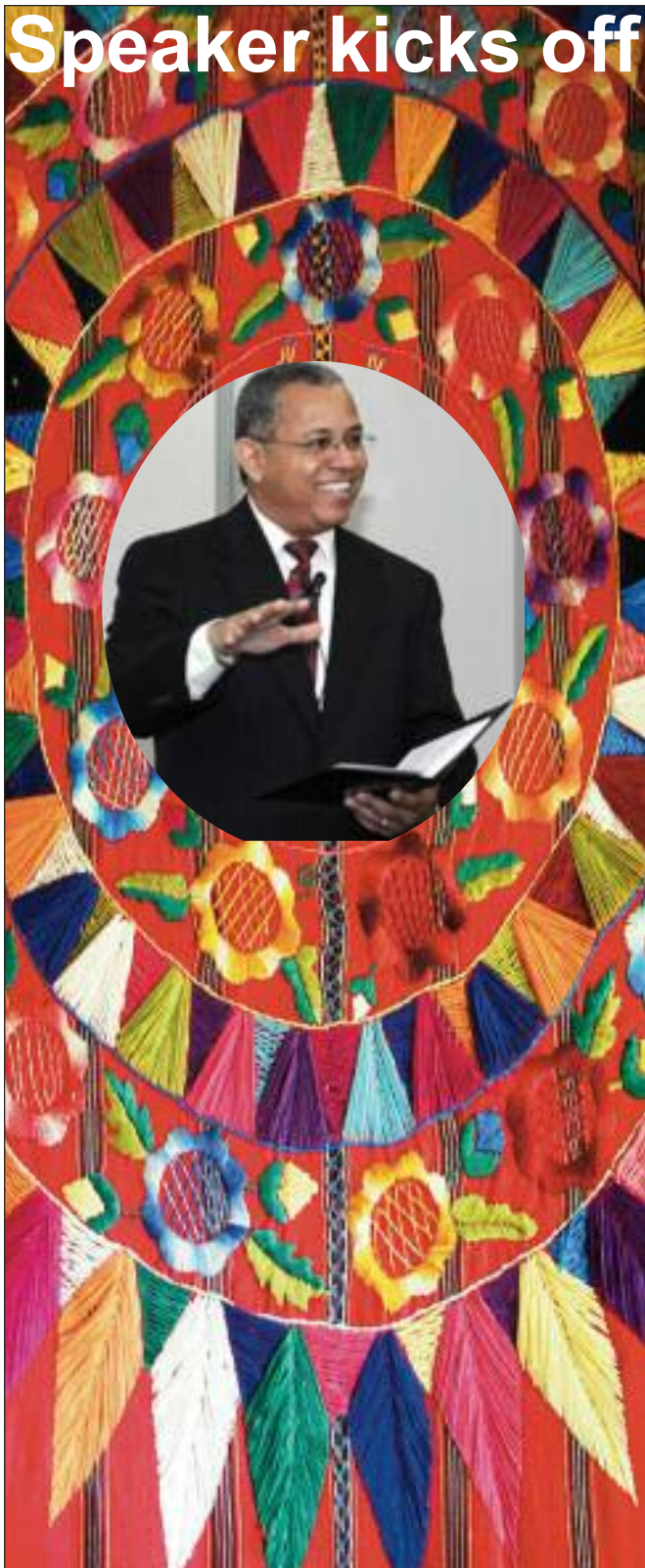
The story of Hispanics in America is the fabric of America itself. The Hispanic community's values - love of family, a deep and abiding faith, and a strong work ethic - are America's values.

Hispanics have played a vital role in the moments and movements that have shaped our country. They have enriched our culture and brought creativity and innovation to everything from sports to the sciences and from the arts to our economy.

Hispanics have served with honor and distinction in every conflict since the Revolutionary War, and they have made invaluable contributions through their service to this country.

They lead and serve in government at every level from school boards to statehouses, and from city councils to Congress. And for the first time in our Nation's history, a Latina is seated among the nine Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

As Hispanics continue to enrich this nation's character and shape the common future, they strengthen America's promise and affirm the narrative of American unity and progress.



Chaplain's Corner ...

Listen. The story is told that a fully-loaded passenger aircraft approached a local airport in the thick of a heavy fog. The seasoned, veteran pilot was faced with a dilemma. The captain had landed at that airport numerous times, but this evening was different.

Never before had the fog been this heavy. It was late evening and this was the last flight listed for this airport that night. Earlier or miles away the captain was told of the fog; but, he reasoned that since he was so familiar with the airport runway and area there would be no problems.

As the plane approached the airport the pilot realized he had never seen a fog this thick before in his flying career. With thousands of flying-time hours logged in with this airline and years as a military pilot, he thought this was the worst fog he had ever seen.

As the aircraft approached the area

where the beginning of the runway was supposed to be, the captain immediately decided to circle the airport. He radioed ahead to the air traffic controllers, "Listen, guys, I am going to circle the airport and make a pass before we land." This airplane had a different configuration than a 747, but he still had more than two hundred passengers on board. The controller in the tower radioed back, "Fine captain. Do you need any help?" To wit, the captain said, "No, I know we have a little fog out there, but I am very familiar with this airport and runway. Let me make this pass and come back in for our landing."

The captain said that knowing full well he was more anxious than he had ever been before but didn't want to admit it. He circled the airport looking for the runway lights and all he could see was a blur in the distance. He

looked at his fuel gauge and realized there was just enough gasoline for one more pass. This time he heard on his radio the voice of the air traffic controller saying, "Captain, remember with our state-of-the-art radar **I can see you, but you can't see me. Let me guide you.**"

The rest is history as he permitted the controller in the tower to guide them safely onto the runway and into the airport.

Moral: God says the same to us.



Services of Worship

Protestant/ Interdenominational

Sunday

10 a.m. Chapel and TV (Ch. 30)

12:30 Psychiatry Unit

1:30 p.m. NHCU (2nd Fl. Day Room)

Catholic

Monday 11:30 a.m. Chapel

Islamic

Friday 1:30 p.m. Chapel

Jewish

The Jewish Chaplain is available by request in the chaplain's office at ext. 6870

What are spiritual injuries of war?

Come see

All are invited to join Chaplain Services and the Atlanta VA Medical Center staff for Spiritual Care Grand Rounds --

"The Spiritual Injuries of War" workshop at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 28 in the chapel.

Presenters will be Lt.Col. Peter E. Bauer, the Army Chief of the Wounded Soldiers program at Fort McPherson and Chap. (Col.) Bill Carr, Army Reserve retired, VAMC Mental Health Chaplain.

To register for training, contact the Chaplain Service staff at 404-321-6111 ext. 6870. Employees will receive a certificate of attendance for Continuing Education Units.



The official Atlanta VAMC Newsletter

Medical Center Director: **James A. Clark**
Internal Information Officer: **Robin Brown**

Atlanta VAMC is published to provide the Veteran community of patients, their families, staff and faculty with information on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of Veterans Affairs in Atlanta and VISN7. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the VA.

■ Send story ideas, letters to the editor and other correspondence to **Editor, Atlanta VAMC (OOPA)** 1670 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA 30033-4004, call 404-321-6111 ext. 5155 or send e-mails to **Robin.Brown5@va.gov**. ■ All photographs belong to the Atlanta VAMC unless otherwise credited.

Physical activity ... anyone?

Matthew Dounel

Contributing writer

Do you ever find an excuse not to exercise? Many people do.

What many may not know is that including physical activity in your daily routine has many healthful benefits of reducing your risk for common health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

Exercising can strengthen your bones and muscles and improve your mental health and mood.

Below are some excuses and tips that may justify a reason to get up and go!

* I'm too busy!

You don't have to exercise one day for a long time. Break up the work out throughout the week into shorter periods.

* I have other chores to do at home!

Gardening and mowing the lawn can also be considered exercise.

* I don't have the right clothes for aerobic classes!

Ever thought of learning how to dance? Salsa? Tango? Merengue? These are all good ways to have fun and exercise too!

* Gym memberships are too expensive!

Take the stairs! You don't need to go to the gym to climb up a flight!

* I don't know what kinds of exercise would be good for me!

Take a brisk walk or go for a jog the next time the weather is nice.

* Those gym machines look difficult!

Ever consider learning a new sport. Tennis? Basketball? Soccer?

Individuals need different amounts and forms of exercise, so contact your health care provider before attempting any new exercise regimen.

For more information, log on to www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity.

Matthew Dounel is a resident physician with the Department of Preventive Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine.



Do you have questions about your Veteran benefits?

For answers, attend a monthly VBA SEMINAR from 9 to 11 a.m. in the Pete Wheeler Auditorium

October 1, 15 - Loan Guaranty
November 5, 19 - VR&E
December 3, 7 - Income Reporting for Pensioners

These seminars are sponsored by the Atlanta VAMC OEF/OIF Program and Atlanta Regional Office.

For more information, contact Kerry Traviss, OEF/OIF Program Manager VAMC
404-321-6111 ext. 6343.

The 2009 CFC Campaign
is underway! So, get those check-books ready. Campaigning will run through the end of October.

No longer the forbidden fruit: colorful foods add good taste to preventative care

Matthew Dounel

Contributing writer

Were you ever told to eat your fruits and vegetables?

As we learn more about these colorful

foods we realize they are a great source of essential nutrients and dietary fiber with an added bonus of low calories.

Fruits and vegetables can even prevent you from possibly developing certain medical conditions.

Studies show eating a more generous portion of fruits and vegetables as part of healthy diet can reduce a person's chance of having diabetes type 2, stroke and perhaps hypertension along with other chronic medical conditions.

Talk with your health care provider



about these additions to your diet:

- Apple slices or carrot sticks as a replacement to other snacks
- A portion of no-sugar-added pineapple or apple rings as a snack?
- A side salad to your lunch
- Dinner that includes

steamed okra, collard greens or spinach as an alternative side dish

The amount and types of fruits and vegetables people consume should depend on their age, gender, activity level and current state of health.

To take control of your health and learn how fruits and vegetables can be a part of your diet, contact your health care provider and log on to www.fruit-sandveggiesmatter.gov.

Matthew Dounel is a resident physician with the Department of Preventive Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine.

Briefly ...

Volunteers needed for parade committee

Prosthetics is looking for volunteers to help, organize and represent the Atlanta VAMC during the 28th annual Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, Nov. 7.

The theme is "Honoring the Infantry."

If you are interested in being part of a walking unit, float committee, motorcycle riders group or lend any other skills you may have to this great event, please contact Anita Williams, parade committee chairperson, at 404-321-6111 ext. 6916.

Veteran Learning Center share information

The Veterans Learning Center (VLC) is devoted to educating the Veteran patient and family member on all health-related issues. The VLC currently offers:

- * Group and individual directed health education
- * Classrooms and individual research work stations
- * Access to health education books and pamphlets
- * Models and teaching posters related to healthy living
- * Video-viewing carrel with earphones
- * Six computers to access the Internet for health education, resources and training
- * Health fairs with clinical providers

Family and caregivers can be included in all activities.

For more information, call 404-321-6111 ext. 4982.

VA creating 28 new Vet centers

Combat Veterans can receive readjustment counseling and other assistance in Muscogee and Richmond counties and 26 additional communities across the country where the Department of Veterans Affairs will establish vet centers in 2010. The community-based vet centers, already in all 50 states, are a key component of VA's mental health program, providing Veterans with mental health screening and post-traumatic stress disorder counseling.

The existing three centers in Georgia are located in Atlanta, Lawrenceville and Macon. Staff members conduct community outreach to offer counseling on employment, family issues and education to combat Veterans and family members, as well as bereavement counseling for families of service-members killed on active duty and counseling for Veterans who were sexually harassed on active duty.

Vet Center services are earned through service in a combat zone or area of hostility and are provided at no cost to Veterans or their families. They are staffed by small multi-disciplinary teams, which may include social workers, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, master's-level counselors and outreach specialists. More than 70 percent of Vet Center employees are Veterans themselves, a majority of whom served in combat zones.

For more information, visit www.vet-center.va.gov/.

TRICARE to lower prices

The Defense Department is projected to reduce spending by \$1.67 billion on prescription medications sold in retail pharmacies in fiscal 2010, by providing discounts in the TRICARE retail pharmacy network.

TRICARE beneficiaries who need a prescription filled immediately and are unable to get to a military pharmacy, can visit one of the more than 54,000 civilian pharmacies that are part of the TRICARE retail pharmacy network.

To locate a retail pharmacy in the network based on ZIP code, call TRICARE at 866-363-8779.

VA warns Veterans of phone scam

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

"America's Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the department built for them," said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "VA simply does not call Veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone."

"VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines," Cross said. "Nor has VA changed its longstanding commitment to protect the personal information of this nation's Veterans."

For more information, call 877-222-8387.

Student checks to be mailed Oct. 2

VA has authorized checks for up to \$3,000 to be given to students who have applied for educational benefits and who have not yet received their government payment. The checks will be distributed to eligible students at VA regional benefits offices across the country starting Oct. 2.

Employees talk to director anonymously

Did you know you have a direct line to the Medical Center director? Would you like to send an anonymous email to share your concerns and suggestions?

To send an anonymous vista email: Access Code:

ATL1997 Verify Code: ATLANTA1.

